

# Vision Statement Contained in the Town's General Plan

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Los Gatos is home. It is the type of community people want to live in because they feel a sense of belonging. When residents drive south on Highway 17, cross over Route 85, see the beautiful Town of Los Gatos nestled at the base of the Santa Cruz Mountains they know they are home. Los Gatos is an oasis of calm within one of the major economic engines in the world, Silicon Valley. People feel safe here. The Town provides excellent schools, beautiful parks, a wonderful Downtown, diverse shopping experiences, and an open and responsive government. It offers amenities, support, and a high quality of life to all residents, including youth and seniors. It incorporates a network of beautiful well-maintained parks and safe, accessible trails. Its citizens and its government understand the importance of sustainability and are committed to making choices that protect and preserve Los Gatos's valuable natural environment and reduce global environmental impacts.

Los Gatos is a truly special place and residents want to protect their community from the increasing development pressures of the region. Residents expect all new development to fit into the fabric of the community and demand that new businesses enhance their high quality of life. Residents make it clear when development projects fail to meet their expectations. Proposed development projects are held to a higher standard and what is approved in other communities may not be acceptable in Los Gatos.

New development must keep pace with the community's needs and must reflect the community's values. Extreme care must be used in approving all new development applications. The impacts of new development must be evaluated in light of the development's overall benefit to the community. In addition, the benefit of new development must be measured against the ability of the proposed development and its architectural style to harmonize with existing development while minimizing impacts on existing residential neighborhoods and infrastructure. Input from surrounding residents and property owners is a major consideration during any development review process.

Preserving the small-town character of Los Gatos is a collection of related issues, including human scale of development, historic preservation, density and intensity, population growth, downtown preservation, development in the Route 85/North 40 area, congestion, open space, views of the hills, the type of businesses located in Town, protection of the Town's various neighborhoods, and community design.

The Town can utilize three important means for ensuring the continuity of values:

- a. Providing mechanisms for broad public participation in government in general and planning in particular;
- b. Taking initiative to coordinate with other jurisdictions on regional issues that impact our Town's character and quality of life; and
- c. Consistent and resolute enforcement of the General Plan, specific plans, and the Town code.

Residents expect strong leadership from their elected officials to guide the community into the next century and to ensure that the high quality of life in Los Gatos is protected for future generations. The General Plan is the Town's guide to achieve this vision. Many of the issues identified in the General Plan are sustainability issues, including open space, hillside protection, environmental quality, natural plant and animal life, resource conservation, and community design.

## **WHAT MAKES LOS GATOS SPECIAL?**

The desire to protect the Town's high quality of life is demonstrated by extensive citizen participation in many service groups and community issues. While residents may disagree over specific issues, they share a common vision of the future of Los Gatos. Residents are adamant in their desire to maintain a high quality of life and preserve the character of the Town. The overall community consensus is that Los Gatos:

- Be a full-service community that is also environmentally sensitive;
- Maintain a balanced, well-designed mix of residential, commercial, service and open space uses, fostering a pedestrian-oriented community with a small town, village-like character;
- Support an active business community that provides a wide variety of goods and services and a broad range of employment opportunities, minimizing the need to travel to other communities; and
- Provides a well-run, efficient municipal government that is fiscally healthy, with high levels of public safety, recreational, art and cultural amenities, and that is committed to high quality education.

The Town has an eclectic mix of building styles. It is a unique combination of old and new that is indicative of a community that has evolved over a period of time. The Town's architecture ranges from a few homes built in the 1850's through a beautifully preserved mix of Victorian cottages and craftsman bungalows, some Victorian and Art Deco commercial buildings, post World War II ranch houses and post-modern homes, and commercial buildings from more recent decades. The Town demonstrates that it is possible to value innovation while appreciating and preserving the past.

\*Source: Town of Los Gatos General Plan Document